Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
12/21/76

Mr. Richard Curtis
156 E. 52 Street
N.Y.C., N.Y. 10022

Dear Dick,

Thursday of last week I saw Bud Fensterwald, who knows Geller, who owns Zebra, and knows his interests in books on political assassinations, in particular about King's, because he asked Bud for such a book and Bud told him I am the only one to do it. Bud knows my work because he was Ray's chief counsel for several years.

What Bud told me makes me more impatient, more anxious because of other circumstances. As a writer you can understand some - my work is being stolen and it has already been misused counterproductively in a subject that means much to me.

Bud told me quite frankly that the book Zebra asked of him is really not much of a book. Yet they gave him a $20,000 advance on it. And that Zebra wants everything they can get on the subject. Well, I have done more work on the subject than anyone else, most of the original work and have several books researched and partly written.

The market is not only with Zebra. Prentice-Hall has given a real whore, Mark Lane, a fat advance for a King assassination book that is part ripoff of my work and part fabrication, without seeing a thing from Lane.

The lack of both a deal and an advance handicaps me much. It limits what I can do, much more now than when I sent you the draft. Now to rush out a draft I'll have to find and pay a typist. My wife has her own life this time of the year. She is a tax consultant. Not only is this her life and a source of gratification to her, she is fantastically good at it and many people do depend on her. My chances of finding a research assistant who has any knowledge of the subject and is any good are reduced by the hirings of the new Congressional committee.

Were none of these things true it remains true that I have done all the original investigating, really all the original non-legal work, and the subject has been hot now for some months. I have almost eight years invested in it. If I do not do something now, especially when I'm pushing 64, when will I?

This is why I wrote you a week ago. It is a month since you asked my phone number so you could speak to me. In this time I could have completed a draft and have engaged the help I need for greater effeciency. Meanwhile, I have every reason to assume that Geller is looking around elsewhere. And that others in the market also are.

You may well be busy on other matters. Most of us are. I am still starting the day before 5 to get as much done as I can. And the last thing I want is to go off on my own. But when Bud tells me what he has and can get me right in what am I to do? I have no choice but to accept his offer if I do not hear from you promptly.

I know what this book can do with promotions because I know that what I have done and am doing is without precedent on any subject. Imagine - I am getting every FBI record in the second largest investigation in its history. I have gone over thousands, have 2700 in hand I've not had a chance to look at and am receiving hundreds more every week. What a backstopping for a book, what a rich vein for a good flack to mine.

The potential is even greater. The first parts of this book deal with the failure of the system of justice. The last part will have the new evidence, my own original work, that can reopen the case, with a ready market for that in an existing committee. This official market will exist even if the committee's life is not extended in the new Congress.

Hastily, impatiently, hopefully,